

Young poets spell out their love for bears, teddy or not

By BENILDE LITTLE

First the bare facts. Good Bears of the World, a Hawaii-based organization dedicated to fostering love for teddy bears, has deemed 1985 The Year of the Bear.

It is also the year when the bear received literary hugs from the young participants of the third annual Urban Voices, Turtle Back Zoo children's poetry contest at the Newark Public Library.

To commemorate the year, all the poems were odes to the bear. Last weekend youngsters who wrote award-winning poems were recognized for their talent, each receiving a stuffed bear and a \$10 check.

Some of the award winners, written by youngsters in grades two through eight, read:

*I've always known my Teddy Bear
He's almost always everywhere
He always seems to calm me down
He makes me smile when I frown
My Teddy Bear makes me sleep
My Teddy Bear I will always keep
He helps me not to be frightened
Always when the light isn't lightened
or him I really care
because he is my Teddy Bear*

That poem was written by Noel Webb, a third-grader at Hartshorn School in Short Hills.

A sixth-grader from Central School in Orange, Lamont Poaches, took a different approach in his poem about bears:

*Chicago Cubs are on the run
They play the game that's lots of fun
They play a game called baseball
Some players are thin some are tall
They wear uniforms white, red, blue
The fans wear the same colors too
The Chicago Cubs are rough and tough
They run around the bases
like Smoke's nuffs*

School No. 7 in Belleville, wrote:

*Oh Teddy Bear
Oh Teddy Bear
How I would still love to tke you
everywhere
I said to my beloved bar
When I was two you helped malthrough
You comforted me
You protected me
And I love you too
Now I don't need you
You sit on a shelf all by yourself
Once in awhile I look at yu
And remember you getting me rough*

There were 55 winners selected from schools throughout Essex county and several in each age group read

their poems to a standing room only crowd. The 150 proud parents and friends listened intently.

"I'm thrilled," said Diane Koehlar, whose son Bryan was one of the winners.

"Last year he wrote a poem about his grandmother and the poem was published in the literary review at school. This poem is about Winnie the Pooh," the mother said proudly.

At the end of the readings, the Sister Filomena Poetry Award, the Feelings Award and the Jackie Lakes Award were presented to three students.

The Jackie Lakes Award was named for a late friend of Anne Brown

Cheatam, founder of Urban Voices, which is a poetry group in Newark. Kevin Woodson of Central Elementary School in Orange was the recipient for his poem, titled "The Case of the Missing Bear."

The Sister Filomena Poetry Award, named for the principal of St. Patrick's School in Newark, was presented to Arron Martin, a student at that school. The Feelings Award went to Mtu Pugh, an eighth-grader at University High School in Newark.

Barbara Dyer, educational coordinator for the West Orange-based zoo, said the Feelings Award was created to recognize a poem that best described the way people feel about animals.

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